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THE BEQUEST OF  
DANIEL MURRAY  
WASHINGTON, D. C.  
1925









# THE DETHRONEMENT OF A KING

By C. V. ROMAN, M. D.

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REPRINT FROM  
Journal of the National Medical Association  
April-June, 1913







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By <sup>Charles</sup> C. V. ROMAN, M. D.

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## The Dethronement of a King.

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"Dehortations from the use of strong liquors have been the favorite topics of sober declaimers in all ages, and have been received with abundance of applause by water-drinking critics," sarcastically wrote Charles Lamb less than a hundred years ago; "but," continues the same author complacently, "with the patient himself, the man that is to be cured, unfortunately, their sound has seldom prevailed."

The writer, though born eight years after the death of Father Matthew, the great Irish apostle of total abstinence, remembers very distinctly when the occasional imbibition of alcoholic liquors, even to excess, did not endanger one's standing in respectable society. This was true of the very best communities. The sparkling glass envisaged paradise, and the brimming bowl drowned every sorrow.

Whether round the festal board or in the house of grief, *alcohol* was king: food for the hungry, drink for the thirsty, medicine for the sick, rest for the weary, hope for the despondent, wealth for the poor, power for the rich, inspiration for the poet, theme for the philosopher, crown for the victor, consolation for the vanquished; stimulant in depression, sedative in excitement, warmth for the cold of collapse, and cold for the heat of fever; the preacher's hope, the lawyer's help, and the doctor's health;

magical food, wonderful drink, cogent medicine; *eau de vie*, *aqua vitae*, water of life, *king of kings*, lord of lords! Man has worshiped him!

“They fought for him,  
They bled for him,  
For him filled many a grave.  
They sighed for him,  
They tried for him,  
They lied for him,  
They died for him,  
Yet made he each a slave.”

But the fight of the ages has been won; the throne of the tyrant is shaking. Soberness is now expected and demanded of all respectable people. In many quarters total abstinence is required to maintain social standing. The tippling minister has disappeared, and the law of “survival of the fittest” is rapidly eliminating the drinking lawyer and the bibulous doctor.

A railroad engineer was recently discharged for drinking *off duty*. He appealed his case to the courts and *lost*.

The State of New York has recently passed a law making it a crime for an intoxicated person to attempt to operate an automobile.

“When I first went to Washington,” says Governor Sulzer, of New York, “a man who did not drink was under suspicion. Now a man who drinks there is under suspicion.” The saloon has been driven from the Capitol basement.

Alcohol has been outlawed from the social board, and now medical officers of the army are seriously advocating total abstinence, for the higher officers at least.

At a meeting of military surgeons, held in Baltimore recently, a paper entitled “Should

"Total Abstinence Be Required of Officers in the Military Service?" was read by Col. L. M. Maus, who forcibly advocated the adoption of the affirmative answer to his query, concluding: "After a careful study of alcohol as a beverage, I am unable to find one single beneficial or useful purpose it serves in the human economy. On the other hand, even in moderate quantities, it reduces every one's efficiency and impairs mental and physical conditions."

Indians from New Mexico were at Washington a few weeks ago seeking to turn their lands over to the United States government in trust to avoid the introduction of "fire water" into their reservations by State laws; and the Indian votes, especially of the women, of Lewiston, Idaho, helped the prohibitionists to win a great victory there.

The National Congress in February last passed a law (the Webb bill) upholding the State prohibition laws.

Total abstinence is not a new doctrine. The Hebrew children were as strenuous and unpopular at the court of Babylon as a modern prohibitionist in some parts of Texas. It has been a long and bitter fight. Alcohol was king by virtue of his hold on human appetite. The majority of men have more belly than brains. Slowly but surely the facts have accumulated.

Statistics compiled by insurance companies show that the death rate for the population at large is 1,000 deaths per year out of every 61,215 of the population; that the death rate of total abstainers is 560 per year out of that number; and for liquor dealers, 1,642 deaths per year out of the same number.

The figures for the British government and English life insurance companies, as to the effect of drinking on longevity, are stated as follows: "If a young man at the age of twenty is a total abstainer and remains a total abstainer, his prospect of life is forty-four years, and he will live to the average age of sixty-four; but if he is a temperate regular drinker, his prospect of life will be thirty-one years, and he will live to the average age of fifty-one, after losing thirteen years out of his life. If he is a heavy drinker, his prospect of life is fifteen years, and he will die at the average age of thirty-five, after losing twenty-nine years out of his life."

"Upon a fruit tree watered with alcohol mixed with water the fruit will fall untimely. With animals the law is the same."

"For a drinking man there is less and less use in the business world. Whisky-befuddled brains do not conduce to satisfactory work in any line. Indeed, in the experience of the industrial world is to be found one of the strongest arguments for the prohibition of the sale of intoxicating liquors."

"After a full investigation of a wreck on the Lackawanna Railroad, at Corning, N. Y., last July, in which forty people were killed and seventy-five injured, the State Public Service Commission has ascribed the frightful tragedy to the fact that the engineer of the train was on a drunken carousal the previous night."

#### THE PERSONAL LIBERTY ARGUMENT CANNOT LONG WITHSTAND SUCH FACTS.

In the social and economical world the forces of King Alcohol have been utterly routed. The

causative relationship of drunkenness to poverty and inefficiency is a demonstrated socio-economic truth. The same result has followed in the medical world. The physical damage resulting from the *abuse* of alcohol has long been conceded. Fatty degeneration of the heart, atrophy of the liver, arterio-sclerosis and insanity are well-known *sequelæ* of alcoholic indulgence. Many physicians now believe there is no good attained by the use of alcohol internally.

"By a flawless course of reasoning it has been demonstrated that alcohol is not a necessity to any person in health, and its utility in disease is strongly questioned. No harm would result should its internal administrations stop at once and absolutely," says a recent medical writer.

Alcohol increases susceptibility to fatigue, lessens physical resistance, diminishes mental acuteness. It is a protoplasmic poison. It is anaphylactic to almost all diseases, and diminishes both mental and muscular coördination. As an anodyne it cannot approach opium or the coal-tar derivatives. As a diffusible stimulant it is inferior to ether and many of the essential oils. Its food value is low and its tonic value nil.

As a stimulant in collapse it cannot approach atropine. As an equalizer of the circulation in the beginning of coryza, sore throat, bronchitis, etc., it is in every way inferior to gelsemium and aconite.

Physical necessity, medical indispensability, and personal liberty have been the strongholds of the advocates of alcohol. It has been more than a generation since any one has attempted

a social, economical, moral, or religious defense of alcohol as a beverage. Both observation and experience have united to demolish the physical necessity argument. It is not a necessity to any healthy human being, either mentally or physically, under any conditions.

"In recent years the moderate users of alcohol have been driven from several positions that hitherto had seemed easily tenable. Their habit and its consequences to them have been subjected to careful laboratory investigation by scientists, experts in psychology and physiology—men who were not sentimentalists, who started with no assumption as to the wickedness or the harmfulness of indulgence in intoxicants. And they all made the same report—that alcohol in any quantity decreases intellectual and industrial efficiency; that never, under its influence, do we either think or work as well as without it; that its first effect, a seeming stimulation of the faculties, is merely an inhibition of those later acquired mental powers that differentiate the civilized man from the savage, the man of normal intellectual development from the imbecile."

Medical investigation and scientific experimentation have narrowed the field of its usefulness in medicine until its value in any form of disease is questionable.

This leaves only the personal liberty argument and indicates that the final battle with King Alcohol will be fought on moral grounds, where the fight began. Personal liberty, "My rights," is the only battle cry left the panic-stricken forces of the dethroned king. The limitation of personal liberty is a question of



morals. The black flag of "no quarter" is up. There can be no compromise. It is the head and heart against the stomach. Heart and brain must rule, or civilization is a failure and *man is lost*. The highest morality consists in subjecting the passions and appetites to *reason*. Alcohol enables the appetites and passions to invade and overrule reason. Hence it not only demoralizes but brutalizes its victims. Appetite and reason are like two buckets in a well: when one goes up, the other comes down.

The moral indictment against alcohol comprehends a list of villainies beyond my power to catalogue or describe.

"He that is a drunkard is qualified for all vice."

"Death deposes intemperance to do the work of age—the intemperate grow prematurely old and usually die untimely."

"Voices are crying from the dust of Tyre,  
From Karnak and the stones of Babylon:  
'We raised our pillars upon self-desire,  
And perished from the large gaze of the sun.'

A grandeur looked down from the pyramid,  
A glory came on Greece, a light on Rome;  
*But in them all the ancient traitor hid,  
And so they passed like momentary foam.*

There was no substance in their soaring hopes,  
The voice of Thebes is now a desert cry;  
A spider bars the road with filmy ropes  
Where once the feet of Carthage thundered by.

A bittern cries where once Queen Dido laughed;  
A thistle nods where once the Forum poured;  
A lizard lifts and listens on a shaft  
Where once of old the Colosseum roared."

Burns, of Scotland; Alexander, of Greece; Poe, of America, form striking illustrations of the impotency of genius to resist the Juggernaut of this tyrant. The white man's "fire water," more than any other agency, vanquished the American Indian. It was rum that demoralized the native African and made the barbarous slave trade across the Atlantic a success. If the ancient and hardy inhabitants of that dark and mysterious continent ever become extinct, it will be through the diabolical agency of alcohol.

The awful murder record of America is largely attributable to the same agency. The greatest enemy of the American negro to-day is neither Jimcrowism nor tuberculosis, but alcohol. Drug addiction, of which alcoholic drunkenness is the most prevalent, if not the most pernicious, example, is a present and actual danger to the perpetuity of the American negro. A people passing from the restrictions of slavery to the responsibilities of freedom is peculiarly susceptible to the seductive and debauching vice of drunkenness. Strong and clear-headed leadership is necessary to enable such a people to resist this baneful influence.

Is it too much to ask that the professional classes of colored people "strengthen the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees" by the example of total abstinence?

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## Women and Temperance.

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(Upon being called upon to preside at a temperance mass meeting under the auspices of the W. C. T. U., in the Spruce Street Baptist Church, Nashville, Tenn., November 23, 1913.)

My presence here this afternoon cost me a good deal of effort and some sacrifice; but I assure you that the effort was made willingly and the sacrifice endured without complaint if not without regret. The lines of our lives are so ordered that we have to make a choice between duties and between pleasures as well as between duties and pleasures. Happy and thrice blessed is he who can unerringly select for performance the most imperative duty and for enjoyment the most enduring pleasure. To-day this good fortune has been mine. There is no more imperative duty for the educated man than to promote the welfare of his race, and no higher pleasure than to help intelligent, self-sacrificing women in their struggle to advance the morals of civilization.

"How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable"  
Would be "all the uses of this world"  
But for the work of women!

The first public question my dawning intellect noted was temperance. Total abstinence, not legal prohibition, was then the propaganda,

and its advocates were considered unwise enthusiasts, dangerous fanatics, or harmless lunatics—in fact, anything but desirable citizens. But time has played his old trick of proving “fanatics” to be prophets. The women were the leaders then as now. .

In my youth I accepted total abstinence from all intoxicating drinks as the proper thing, because

“My mother told me so.”

After more than twenty years’ experience in the practice of medicine and surgery, I said to a class of young men about to receive their diplomas in medicine:

“The body is the servant of the mind. A wise man will be kind to his servant. Do not abuse your bodies. Eat enough, but avoid gluttony; sleep enough, but avoid drowsiness. Don’t be finicky or cranky, but be temperate in all things. Be chary of the allurements of John Barleycorn and the blandishments of Nicotina; the one is a *roué* without conscience, and the other is a hag without morals. Both are fond of destroying the character and usefulness of the young. No positive good has ever come to any one by associating with either of them.”

My experience as a physician has confirmed the intuitions of my mother; and after twenty-five years in medicine I am firmly convinced that total abstinence is best. Civilization has recognized the open saloon as an enemy, and has decreed its destruction. What is coming, I know not; but I *do* know that the saloon is going. As Miriam sang of Pharaoh’s overthrow,

so I hope to hear some noble and inspired woman sing the final overthrow of King Alcohol.

"Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea!  
Jehovah has triumphed; his people are free.

Sing, for the pride of the tyrant is broken;  
His chariots and horsemen all splendid and brave,  
How vain was their boast! The Lord hath but spoken,  
And chariots and horsemen are sunk in the wave.  
Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea!  
Jehovah has triumphed; his people are free."

The argument, once so popular, that alcohol in moderation was not harmful, has been punctured beyond repair by the emotionless hand of science. Experts in psychology and physiology have proved beyond a doubt that neither mental nor physical work is ever done so well with as without alcohol. The saloon has sinned away the day of grace. As it has refused to be controlled, it must be destroyed. Since it will not be legitimate, civilization has decreed that it shall not be at all.

The chief condemnation of the saloon is not the sale of intoxicating liquors, but *prostitution* has become a commercialized asset of the liquor traffic, and gambling is encouraged by the open saloon. So the modern saloon will go the way of ancient Babylon and for the same reason.

"In Babylon, mad Babylon,  
What get you for your pence?  
A moiety of cinnamon,  
Of flour and frankincense.  
But let the shekels in your keep

Be multiplied by ten,  
And ye shall purchase slaves and sheep—  
Yea, and the souls of men."

Instinct is often more accurate than reason, and intuition is a safer guide than judgment. The instincts of motherhood and the intuitions of love have made women the enemies of King Alcohol, who has commercialized female virtue for profit and bartered manhood for gold.

Ladies of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union, mothers, sisters, daughters of civilization, your cause is just. Fight on for the coming of that glorious day when the brains of men will unite with the hearts of women to protect the homes of our land!





Walker

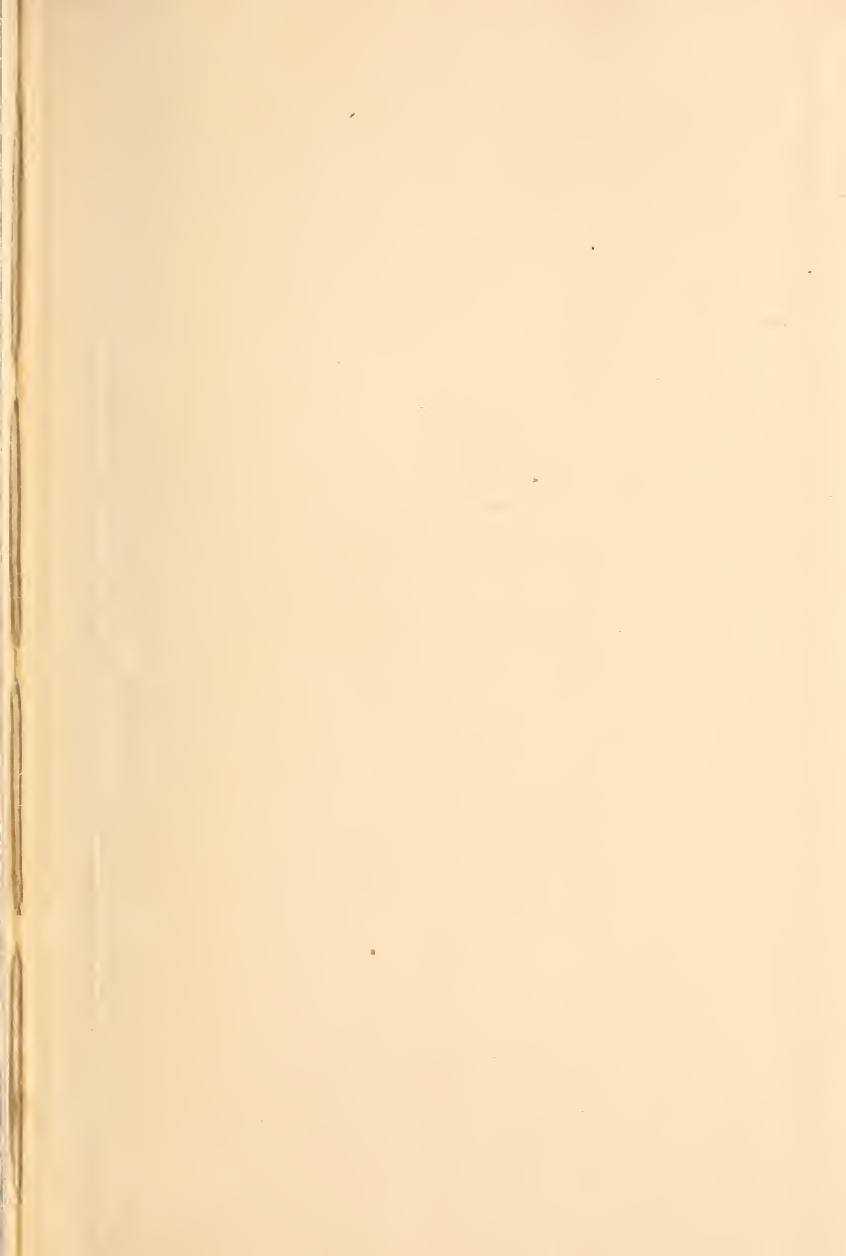












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